

SECTION III—REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action mailed July 27, 2004. Claims 1, 7-12, 15-23, 25-27, 29-30, 32, and 34-44 are cancelled, and new claims 45-50 are added. Claims 45-50 remain pending in the application. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and allowance of all pending claims in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Restriction Requirement

The Examiner restricted the claims in the application into 5 groups:

Group I, comprising claims 7-12, 26 and 27;

Group II, comprising claims 15-18 and 29;

Group III, comprising claims 19-22 and 30;

Group IV, comprising claims 34-37, 41 and 43; and

Group V, comprising claims 38-40 and 44.

The Examiner indicated that claims 1 and 23 link groups I-III and claims 32 and 42 link groups IV and V.

In a telephone conversation with the Examiner on or about July 12, 2004, Applicants' legal representative elected, without traverse, the invention of Group I. Applicants' legal representative hereby affirms the previously-made election of Group I.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claims 8-12 and 27 for being dependent on a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if re-written in independent form including all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claim.

New claim 45 combines the limitations previously found in claim 8 and its base claim, independent claim 1. Applicant submits that new claim 45 is therefore allowable. As to new dependent claims 46-49, if an independent claim is allowable then any claim depending therefrom is also allowable. *See generally* MPEP § 2143.03; *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Applicants submit that new claims 46-49 are therefore allowable by virtue of their

dependence on allowable independent claim 45, as well as by virtue of the features recited in the claims. Applicants therefore respectfully request allowance of the claims.

New claim 50 combines the limitations previously found in claim 27, intervening claim 26, and its base claim, independent claim 23. Applicant submits that new claim 50 is therefore allowable and respectfully requests allowance of the claim.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 23, 25 and 26 as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 by various references. Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's rejections are moot in view of the cancellation of these claims.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 9-25, and 27-29 under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as obvious in view of, and therefore unpatentable over, U.S. Patent No. 5,526,144 to Dickson on view of U.S. Patent No. 5,095,375 to Bolt. Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's rejections are moot in view of the cancellation of these claims.

Double Patenting Rejection

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under the judicially-created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting. According to the Examiner, claim 1 of the present application is unpatentable over claim 5 of U.S. Patent No. 6,498,662. Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's rejection is moot in view of the cancellation of claim 1.

Conclusion

Given the above amendments and accompanying remarks, all claims pending in the application are in condition for allowance. If the undersigned attorney has overlooked a teaching in any of the cited references that is relevant to allowance of the claims, the Examiner is requested to specifically point out where such teaching may be found. Further, if there are any informalities or questions that can be addressed via telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at (206) 292-8600.

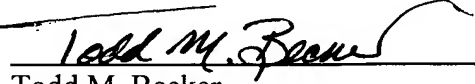
Charge Deposit Account

Please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any additional fee(s) that may be due in this matter, and please credit the same deposit account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

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Todd M. Becker
Attorney for Applicant(s)
Registration No. 43,487

Blakely, Sokoloff, Taylor & Zafman LLP
12400 Wilshire Boulevard, Seventh Floor
Los Angeles CA 90025-1030
Phone: 206-292-8600
Facsimile: 206-292-8606

Enclosures: Postcard
Amendment transmittal, in duplicate